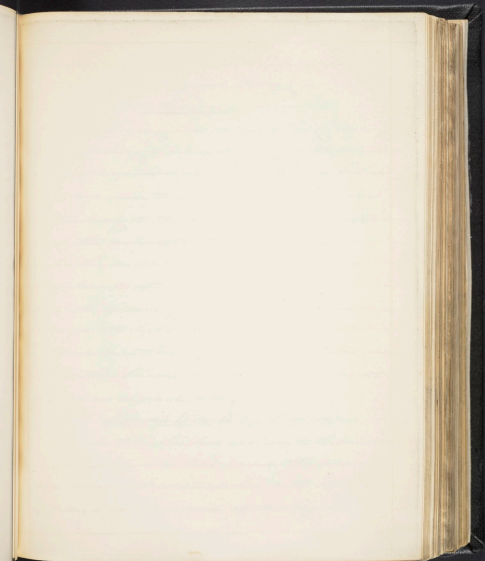


*Given March 5
1828*

AN
INAUGURAL ESSAY
ON
COLIC :
FOR THE DEGREE
OF
DOCTOR OF MEDICINE
IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

BY
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OF
PENNSYLVANIA &c







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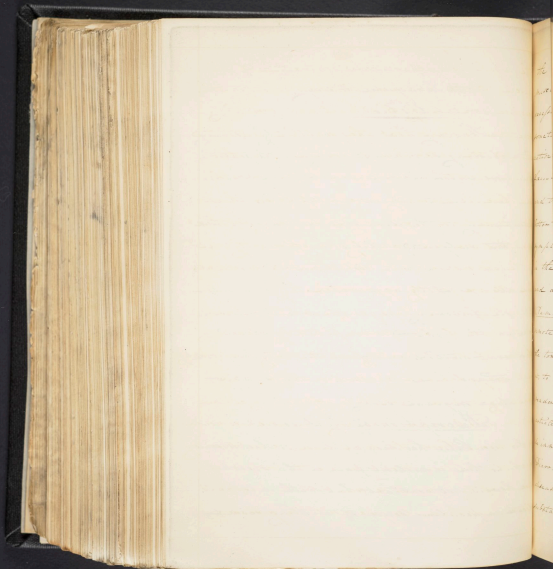
St. Augustine Edwy
Colic

Having had an opportunity during the preceding business of seeing in the practice of my preceptor several cases of Stomach Colic, I have induced to direct my attention more particularly to the disease, and have selected it as the subject for this essay.

The nature and treatment of Colic have been so often and accurately described, that the following pages must be considered more in the light of a compilation from different authors and from the lectures, and instructions I have received on the subject than of an original essay.

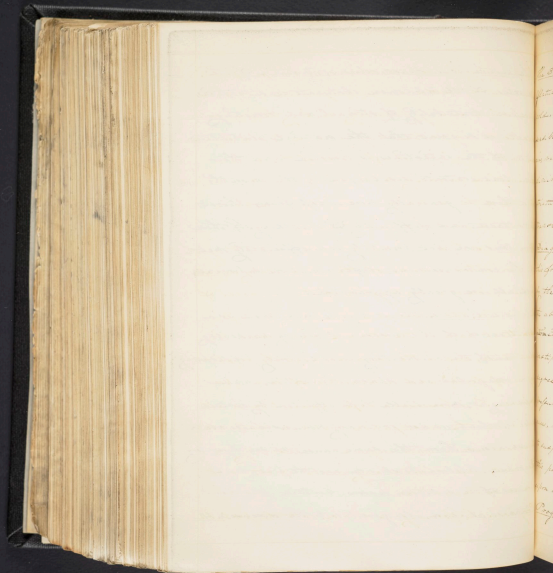
Description of the Disease

The term Colic has been applied to that disease in which, there is violent pain in the stomach and bowels, not constant, but with intervals of ease, a peculiar kind of twisting sound



the irritable, spasmodic contraction of the muscles of the abdomen, obstinate constipation, insupportable irritability of stomach, and vomiting; sometimes so great, that the natural peristaltic action of the intestines is inverted and their feculent contents discharged by the mouth; and there is generally more or less fever, thirst, bitter taste, and difficulty of breathing. If these symptoms are not promptly and efficiently met in the commencement, inflammation supervenes, and all are greatly aggravated.

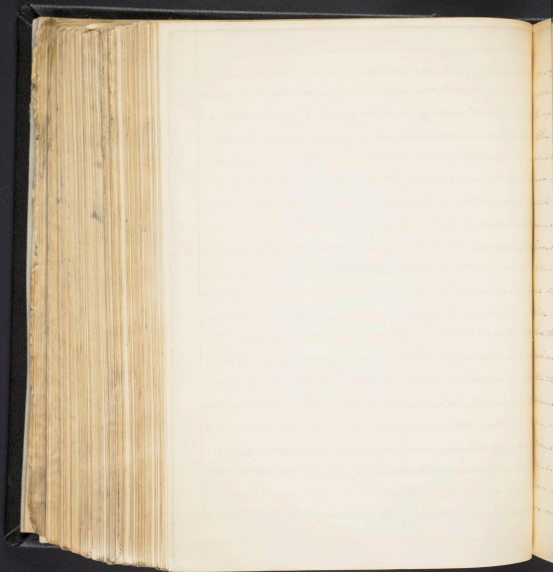
Remote Causes. That may be mentioned as a remote cause of this disease, it acts by weakening the tone of the alimentary canal, thereby predisposing it, to irregular and spasmodic action, and rendering it, more liable to be affected by certain articles, which, under ordinary circumstances would be innocuous. From the same cause, we see Dyspepsia, Diarrhoea, Cholera Morbus &c. are the prevalent diseases of the human system. Certain poisonous substances at least, also give rise to the disease.



The Secondary Causes are various, as Haemiplegia, flatulent vegetables, acrid indigestible substances, colds which acts by suddenly checking the perspiration and the circulation, as by exposure to cold damp air violent passions or affections of the mind, diminished capacity of the prime via from various structure of the system or hard indurated fibres, translated gout or rheumatism &c.

Diagnosis. It is in most instances easy to distinguish this from other diseases of the alimentary canal by the spasmodic contraction of the muscles of the abdomen, the severe and peculiarly distressing intermittent pain in the stomach and bowels, the constipation, and in the commencement, the slight degree of fever and diminution of pain upon perspire. It is however a safe precaution in all cases, when the constipation continues obstinate to suspect hernia and enquire particularly on this point, and should any doubt exist, insist upon an examination.

Prognosis. In forming an opinion, as to the probable



of the case, we are to be guided by the nature
and continuance of the symptoms present, by
the age and preceding state of the patient's health.
When our remedies effect a relaxation of spasm,
diminution of pain and vomiting, diminution of
fever and restoration of the natural peristaltic
action of the intestines, accompanied with a free
examination of their contents, no progress will be
favorable; in the contrary, when the bowels continue
obstinately constipated, with increase of pain, fever
and other symptoms indicative of inflammation,
when there is something of stercoraceous matter, or
when the patient is old and infirm or afflicted by
previous disease, it will be more unreasonable. If
after having resisted our efforts to remove it at
several days, there should be sudden cessation of
pain, with a continuance of constipation, a weak,
frequent pulse, cold clammy sweats, we may
conclude that mortification has taken place
and all our efforts to save our patient will
be vain.



5.
Dysentery After post mortem examination, the following appearances have been observed: Spasmodic contraction of some part or parts of the bowels, distention of them by flatulency, inflammation, inflammation of the surface of the intestines, and where this has been great, coagulable lymph has been thrown out which is found agglutinating them to each other thereby preventing their peristaltic action, and affording an obvious reason for the obstinate continuance, which had been its prominent symptom, also showing the inability of our means to overcome it, where such a state exists.

Pathology From the preceding description, it may be perceived, that we consider this disease generally originating from acridine heat excoriated the alimentary canal, which most of the readers it has been easily affected by certain articles of diet that cause a spasmodic contraction of some part of it, affecting the abdominal muscles, producing cramp, vomiting &c and this opinion I am soon relieved & formed by inflammation and its consequences.



When lead is the cause, it is supposed to act by
disturbing the nervous sensibility of the stomach.

Most practical writers divide this disease
into different species, as Flatulent, Bilious, and Cramp
Colic, &c. this points the celebrated Cullen remarks
"so far, as a difference of the remote cause con-
stitutes a difference of species, a distinction may
perhaps be admitted;" again, "in all these different
species the proximate cause is the same, that is,
a spasmodic contraction of a part of the intestines,
and consequently, that in all these cases the indi-
cation of cure is the same, that is, to remove the
contraction mentioned," in those cases in which the
disease depends upon an obstruction in the intestines,
he continues, "I am persuaded that these obstructions
do not produce the symptoms of colic, excepting so
far as they produce spasmodic contractions of
the intestines." It is not our intention to treat separately
of each species, but of the disease in general; we
believe the urgent symptoms to be alike in each,
differing only in degree, the indications of cure



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to be similar but the measures adapted to fulfill
them are necessarily different, he imagines the
practitioner should adapt his remedies to the organ
affected and the state of the system, when such
remedy be effective, he should not resort to the
same action.

Treatment

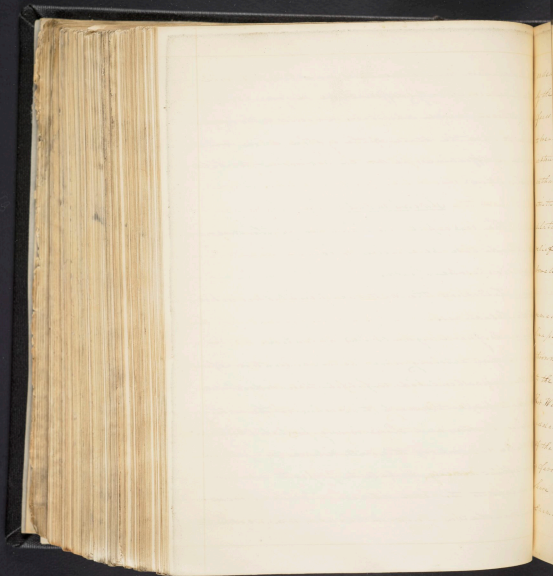
The principal indications in the cases
of this disease are concise to be.

First To Remove Pus.

Second To Restore the natural peristaltic action
of the intestines.

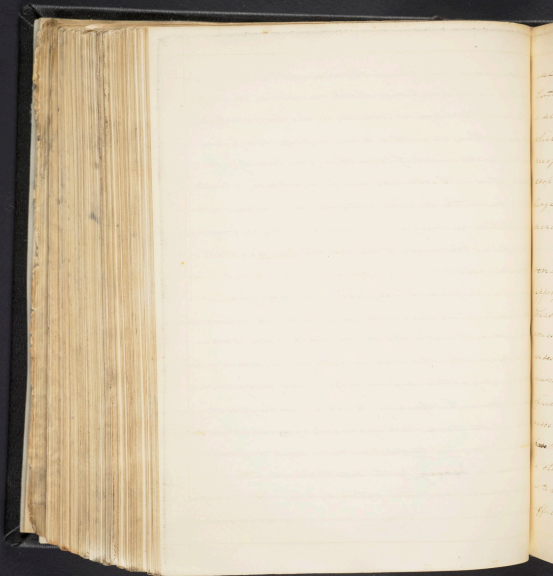
Third To Guard against Inflammation.

Before entering upon the consideration of
the means calculated to fulfill these indications
it may be proper to remark, that whenever the exciting
cause is known, and there is any probability that
the more removal of this will relieve our patient
and effect a cure, it will be proper to adapt
our means to this end alone. When it arises
from translated joint, or rheumatism, we should



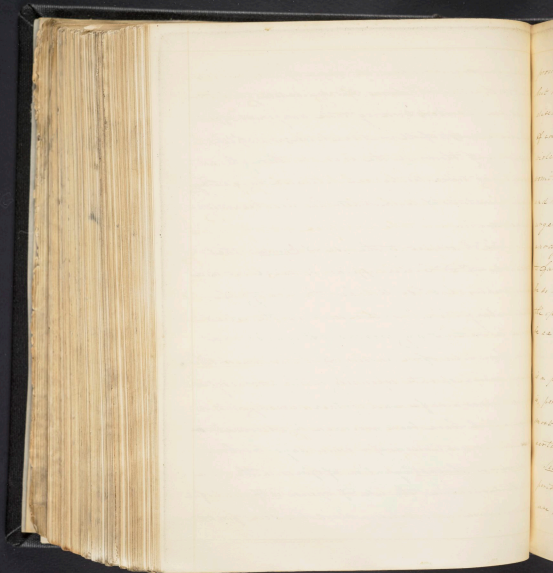
endeavour to bring back the disease to the intestines,
by the use of emetics, which the if given in partial
force in the large intestine, it has been advised,
to break them up with a scoop or some similar
instrument, and to follow this operation by a mild
cathartic of Castor oil, and by injections. When
stricture of the rectum is the cause, gradual
dilatation by bougies has overcome this, and affords
relief, at the same time, we should keep the
bowels open.

Topical or local indications, various
remedies have been resorted to, as Opium, benedictine
liniments, Blister, the Warm Bath, Cold Water
thrown on the abdomen or extremities, Horsetail
to the epigastric region by Glucose may put in
Cold Water in Hot Brand, to which infrequently
added Mustard, or Turpentine, and Sassafras.
Of the latter one of cold water is said to have been
a fortunate remedy of the late Dr. Hall and to
have succeeded, where others had failed, Carbox
Sassafras are highly recommended as a frequent



used, in some instances as means of Laceration,
 Scarification, or Trepanning has succeeded, the latter
 is seldom resorted to, owing to the dangerous effects
 which are apt to follow its exhibition; it is often
 necessary to throw up the evacuator through an
 esophageal tube. Mechanical stimulation by injecting
 large quantities of warm water has also been recom-
 mended.

With respect to the use of Opium, the
 remarks of Dr. Cullen appear so excellent and
 appropriate, that I shall take the liberty of
 transcribing them. "In all cases where the colic
 comes on without any previous colicness, and
 arises from cold, from passions of the mind, or other
 causes which operate especially on the nervous system,
 opium proves a safe and certain remedy; but in
 cases which have been preceded by colicness, or
 have however continued for some days without
 a stool, so that stagnation of faeces in the colon
 is to be suspected, the use of opium is of doubtful
 effect. In such cases, unless a stool has been first



promoted by medicines, opium cannot be employed
but with some hazard of aggravating the
disease. However, even in these circumstances
of constipation, when, without inflammation, the
violence of the spasm is to be suspected, when
vomiting prevents the exhibition of purgatives,
and when with all this the pain is extremely
urgent, opium is to be employed, not only as an
anodyne, but also as an antispasmodic, necessary
to govern the operation of purgatives, and may
be employed, when either at the same time with
the opiate, or not long after it, a purgative can
be exhibited."

It must all admit agree that Operection
is a powerful antispasmodic, and in this disease,
if, perhaps, when used with due discretion, the
most active means we can employ, the most
certain and speedy in its effects.

Loose, Evacuation. To restore the natural
propulsive action of the intestines, Purgatives
are necessary, if these Calomel and the Milk



in this oil, as Castor Oil, Magnesia, the Mentha
oil etc. are much used.

Colic appears particularly applicable, in
addition, to its remaining more readily on the stomach,
it exerts a peculiar action on certain organs, it also
stimulates the capillary vessels to increased
secretions, and may in this way relieve the constriction,
it is either given alone or combined with opium. In
many cases its peculiar action on the system (which
is indicated by typhoid) must be excited, before
relief is obtained.

In conjunction with these means Crocus
are equally beneficial in fulfilling this, as the
first indication, at first we would use the mildest
as we have water oil and oil. If this were not
sufficiently active, we would add some purgative
or use some of those before mentioned.

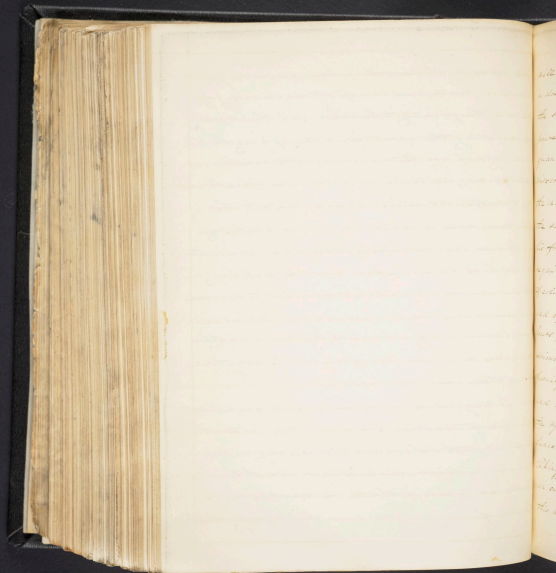
Stomachic taken from the severity or con-
tinuance of the spasm, or the violence of spasm we
have reason to fear inflammation; we must guard
against adhesions, ulcers or gangrene, by the



free use of the lancet, the pulse, appearance of
the blood drawn, and relief obtained will guide
us as to the quantity to be taken and the propriety
of repeating the operation, or of applying leeches,
or cups, which are often indispensable auxiliaries
after having effected by general and local bleed-
ing to sufficient extent, a large blister to the
abdomen will in many instances be necessary.

We have now considered each indication separately,
and have suggested such means of fulfilling
them as occurred to us to be most likely to succeed.
We deem it necessary, that our indications should be
fulfilled separately, several of the means pointed
out above will meet two or more at the same time,
hence these are most important.

It may not be improper briefly to recapitulate
our plan of treatment, as I intend to a patient
suffering with cholera, where the exciting cause
was any improper article of diet, and still
continued to act, it should be removed by an
emetic, if necessary, the morbid matter being drawn



will generally answer the purpose, and subsequently
 a dose of Emetic should be given, to carry off
 the secretions from the Liver on which had been
 poured into the alimentary canal in undue
 quantity, during the commotion of the abdominal
 viscera, cases of this description rarely fall under
 the notice of the physician, being soon relieved by
 the simple means, which the patient himself or
 his friends direct. And when our assistance is
 required, we generally find that the usual symptoms
 of colic, as vomiting, obstinate constipation, violent
 and spasmodic pains, have continued for some
 hours perhaps a day or longer notwithstanding
 various treatments have been fully solicited by the
 family, here it often behoves us to act with promptness
 and decision, if the pulse or the general state of
 the system is not absolutely forbid the use of the
 Laxative, I should commence the treatment with it,
 taking away a sufficient quantity of blood to produce
 an emetic impression on the system, as soon as
 this is done, I should direct the patient to



takes from tea to twenty grains of Calomel with
 one or two of Opium and to have a Mustard poultice
 applied over the Epigastric region without delay,
 to relieve the intolerable thirst which is generally
 attending, and assist in quieting the stomach.
 There is nothing more generally useful than a
 hot tea made of fresh Green Mint (*Mentha Viridis*)
 but this should not be taken in larger quantity
 than a Table Spoonful at a time, as it acts with
 rejection. If the vomiting be changed by this means,
 or if there appears to be the least prospect of it
 being retained, no more should be given, as soon
 as the Calomel, if this do not operate, repeat
 the dose every two hours, giving at the intermediate
 hour from two to five grains of Calomel. Saccharum
 be repeatedly administered at the same time.
 if the stomach cannot bear the Cal. Selt may be
 substituted and sometimes lemon tea, but the latter
 notice is to use of itself to give that no use
 is not often admissible. We are therefore
 frequently compelled to trust the good Calomel



and Scurvy, stopping the bleeding after a lapse of five or eight hours, or in some violent cases, as often and as promptly as would be required in Chloremia. Leeches or Eggs fresh applied over the abscess, as soon as the force of the inflammation is in some measure subdued, are of the greatest benefit, their application to be followed by a Blister, as soon as complete relief had been obtained.

The diet must be scrupulously attended to, and nothing allowed which would in any way tend to aggravate the disease. Demulcents, as Flax seed tea, Gum arabic water, Barley water, &c. are alone proper and even these must be carefully administered and in small quantities at a time.

By these means, promptly and assiduously employed by night, as well as by day, relief will be eventually obtained, at least they proved successful in the cases, I had an opportunity of witnessing, tho' in some very severe cases not until Syphilis was produced, this was invariably the precursor of convalescence, the salivation.



Medically proved more severe, than that described,
but it is so rare & more than temporary in occurrence.

From the great liability to a return of this
disease, we should impress upon our patients
the importance of avoiding all exciting causes,
of abstaining from all articles of diet which have
ever produced the disease, and of guarding against
sudden changes of temperature by wearing flannel
next the skin throughout the year.



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